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CORRESPONDENCE.

EDGREN'S FRENCH GRAMMAR.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES:

SIRS:—Though mostly on the old lines, Prof. EDGREN's effort in his 'Compendious Grammar'* is very acceptable, at least to teachers; it presents in a condensed form the substantial elements of the language, and the rules are impressed in a terse, concise manner. It is a decided improvement on the grammars of the same kind which we still have among us. This presentation of the subject has even its streaks of originality, owing, no doubt, to the fact that the author, being neither English nor German nor French, is able to consider his material from a point of view different from that to which we are accustomed.

The book is divided into two 'independent' parts. The First Part (pp. i-lxvi) contains merely an elementary outline of the essentials of pronunciation and accidence, with exercises, and is intended "to enable the learner to begin reading . . . in from three to six weeks." The Second Part (pp. 1-293) goes over the usual ground of the parts of speech and their syntax. It consists of rules and explanation following each other in regular succession, without interruption of exercises. These are placed together at the end, and are simply selected English sentences to be translated into French, the author having wisely done away with translations—more than useless—from French into English.

This Second Part includes also valuable glimpses into the historical growth and development of the French language from the Latin. Other additions, not less interesting, must be noticed: first, a chapter on the arrangement of the French sentence; then a short but clear and well-worded exposition of French verse; and last, not least, some very useful remarks on the relations of Anglo-French words. Such additions go far to redeem the dry details of a grammar which is very much condensed and abundantly supplied with technical terms. But for these additions a strong impression would remain of unmiti-

*A compendious French Grammar in two independent parts (Introductory and Advanced) by A. HJALMAR EDGREN, Ph. D. Boston: D. C. Heath, 1890.

gated doubt as to the usefulness of grammar for a student, except for reference.

This doubt existed, unconsciously perhaps but yet certainly, in the mind of Prof. EDGREN, who, as if in consequence of a happy afterthought, prefaces the working pages with the following remark: "These grammar-studies should all be *subordinated* to critical *copious reading*"—a remark that should not be put in small type, but should have special attention called to it by being set in large print. Such reading exercise is the gist of all language learning, especially that of French.

But even a short notice such as the present one is not complete without some sharp criticism, which must fall on the inadequate chapter on pronunciation, particularly the part devoted to a treatment of the vowels. It contains too many flagrant heresies and abounds in too many violations of the acknowledged and easily accessible canons of standard French pronunciation, to be passed in silence; nothing short of a thorough overhauling will save these pages from absolute condemnation. Contrary to what might be expected in such a case, Prof. EDGREN's practice—for the reviewer has often had the pleasure of conversing in French with the author—is very good, and therefore much better than his theory.

A. DE ROUEMENT.

Chautauqua University.

BRIEF MENTION.

Among the recent numbers of the *Ausgaben und Abhandlungen* (Marburg) we note 'Esclarmonde, Clarisse et Florent, Ide et Olive' (No. lxxxiii), three sequels to 'Huon de Bordeaux,' edited from a single manuscript by MAX SCHWEIGEL, with the customary introduction and a comparison of the prose sequels with the poetical;—'Galiens li Restorés' (No. lxxxiv), published by Prof. STENGEL from the Cheltenham MS., together with the prose versions, and prefaced with a study by K. PFEIL on the mutual relations of the Galien versions, an enormous labor for which all Romance students are indebted;—the reproduction of three versions of MONTCHRESTIEN's 'Sophonisbe' (No. lxxxv), by L. FRIES, with a history of the subject and